

# THE SECRET WAR ON ET CONTACTEES

*Since the early 1950s, a series of counterintelligence programs run by the CIA, NSA, FBI and other US agencies have been used to monitor, debunk, discredit and neutralise alien contactees and supporters on the pretext of their threat to national security.*

by Michael E. Salla, PhD

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Email:  
drsalla@exopolitics.org

Websites:  
<http://www.exopolitics.org>  
<http://www.galacticdiplomacy.com>

## Exposing the Covert Counterintelligence Programs

In the early 1950s, a select group of individuals began to make claims publicly of having had direct physical contact with "human-looking" representatives of different extraterrestrial (ET) civilisations. These "contactees" claimed to have been given knowledge of the extraterrestrials' advanced technologies, philosophical beliefs and efforts to assist humanity in becoming part of a galactic society where open contact with off-world civilisations would occur. Contactees described the extraterrestrials as benign, very respectful of human free will and ancestrally linked to humanity (thus dubbed the "space brothers"). Further revealed by the contactees was that extraterrestrials, who in many cases were indistinguishable from humans, had secretly integrated into human society.<sup>1</sup> The apparent goals were to acquaint themselves better with different national cultures and/or to participate in an educational uplift program to prepare humanity for galactic status. Contactees began to disseminate to the general public the nature of their experiences and knowledge gained through interaction with extraterrestrials.

Information revealed by contactees presented an unrivalled national security crisis for policy-makers in the United States and other major nations. Two main elements comprised this crisis. First, the advanced space vehicles and technologies possessed by extraterrestrial civilisations were far more sophisticated than the most developed aircraft, weapons and communications systems possessed by national governments. This presented an urgent technological problem that required vast national resources to bridge the technological gap with extraterrestrials. It led to a second Manhattan Project whose existence and secret funding would be known only to those with a "need to know".<sup>2</sup> Manhattan II, along with evidence of extraterrestrial visitors and technologies, would be kept secret from the general public, the media and most elected political representatives.

Second, extraterrestrial civilisations were contacting private individuals and even having some of their representatives integrate into human society.<sup>3</sup> This was encouraging growing numbers of individuals to participate in a covert extraterrestrial effort to prepare humanity for "galactic status"—where the existence of ETs would be officially acknowledged and open interaction would occur. Also included was the issue of nuclear disarmament. Tens of thousands of individuals supported the contactees who distributed newsletters, spoke at conferences and travelled widely, spreading their information for peacefully transforming the planet and calling for an immediate end to the development of nuclear weapons. Nuclear weapons threatened more than humanity's future, according to the extraterrestrials. Every detonation disrupted the fabric of space, which could also seriously affect their own worlds in destructive ways.

Directly confronted were the policies of major nations that were actively building nuclear weapons. Enormous revolutionary potential for the entire planet was put forward. Thus, contactees presented an urgent national security need for an extensive counterintelligence program. Preventing the contactee movement from becoming a catalyst for global changes through the teachings and experiences gained from ETs became top priority. Consequently, a highly secret and ruthless counterintelligence program was finally implemented that directly targeted contactees and their supporters.

A series of covert intelligence programs was implemented that aimed to neutralise the revolutionary potential of the contactee movement. These programs evolved in three phases, which resulted in the final counterintelligence program that was adopted to eliminate any threat posed by contactees.

- Phase one was the initial surveillance of contactees by intelligence agencies, which

attempted to discern the scope and implications of human and extraterrestrial interaction.

- Phase two was the more active phase of debunking and discrediting contactees and their supporters.

- Phase three was integrated into the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI's) COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program), which provided the necessary cover for comprehensively neutralising any possible threat by contactees who might join other dissident groups for comprehensive policy changes.

All three phases of the covert programs employed against contactees were secretly run by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Air Force Office of Special Investigations (AFOSI) and the National Security Agency (NSA), whose field agents were directly aware of the reality of extraterrestrial life and the contact and communications occurring with private citizens.

This paper concentrates on the covert counterintelligence program adopted by US national security agencies that targeted contactees ever since the 1950s in an effort to nullify, discredit and debunk evidence confirming private citizen contact with extraterrestrial civilisations and the revolutionary potential this had to transform the planet.

### Phase One: Intelligence Agencies Monitor Contactees

There is extensive documentation to establish that the FBI closely monitored contactees and was keenly interested in determining the scope of their activities resulting from communications and interactions with extraterrestrials.<sup>4</sup> *Declassified FBI documents establish that prominent contactees were subjected to close monitoring, where their statements and activities were investigated, and field agents directly issued reports to the FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover.* Field agent reports

suggest that the FBI Director was seriously trying to apprise himself of the revolutionary potential posed by contactees and the threat to US national security. This is not surprising, given documentation that suggests the FBI was largely left out of the intelligence loop concerning ET technologies.<sup>5</sup> Hoover was probably relying on surveillance of contactees to inform himself of the true situation concerning extraterrestrials.

George Van Tassel claimed that in August 1953 he had a physical meeting with human-looking extraterrestrials from Venus. He subsequently established regular "telepathic" communications with them, where he was given information that he shared with his many supporters and public authorities. Popularity grew rapidly for Van Tassel, who had many thousands read his newsletters and attend his public lectures. Thousands also attended Van Tassel's annual Giant Rock flying saucer conventions in the Mojave Desert that began in 1954 and over a 23-year period became the key annual event for the contactee movement.

FBI interest in Van Tassel dated from November 1953, when he sent a letter to the Air Technical Intelligence Center (ATIC) at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base on behalf of "Commander Ashtar" to deliver a "friendly warning" concerning the destructive weapons then under development.<sup>6</sup> This led to a meeting between Major S. Avner of AFOSI, who met with a liaison for the FBI, and culminated in Van Tassel being interviewed by the two

special agents on 16 November 1954. The agents sent an extensive memo to J. Edgar Hoover, detailing Van Tassel's claims to having been visited by extraterrestrials.<sup>7</sup> Revealed by the memo is Hoover's special interest in what the ETs had to say about the atomic weapons, an upcoming Third World War and their ability to communicate telepathically with Van Tassel.

Another contactee who received much FBI attention was George Adamski. Adamski first became known in 1947 for his photos of flying saucers and motherships, taken with an amateur telescope on Mount Palomar, California, which received wide coverage. He became the most well known of all contactees due to his internationally best-selling books describing his meetings with extraterrestrials. The first book, *Flying Saucers Have Landed* (1953; co-authored with Desmond Leslie), was based on Adamski's 20 November 1952 Desert Center encounter with "Orthon", the Venusian occupant of an extraterrestrial scoutcraft. Orthon proceeded to tell Adamski about the dangers posed by nuclear weapons and the possibility that all life could be destroyed in an uncontrolled nuclear reaction. Four months later, in February 1953, Adamski claimed to have had another encounter, in which he was picked up by two ETs at a Los Angeles hotel lobby and driven to a secret location where he again met Orthon and was taken inside a Venusian mothercraft.<sup>8</sup>

Adamski's UFO sightings and contacts with extraterrestrials were supported by an impressive collection of witnesses as well as photographs and films which a number of independent investigators concluded were not hoaxes.<sup>9</sup>

Interest in Adamski by the FBI began in September 1950 when a confidential source started relaying information to the FBI's San Diego office. According to the source, Adamski explained that the social system used by the extraterrestrials most closely resembled communism.

This "raised eyebrows within the FBI, and led to continued, deep monitoring".<sup>10</sup> Also according to the FBI source, Adamski claimed that "this country is a corrupt form of government and capitalists are enslaving the poor".<sup>11</sup> Predictably, such comments led to Adamski being viewed as a "security matter".<sup>12</sup> The source was never revealed by the FBI and so there was no way to evaluate the source's objectivity in relaying such prejudicial information. Adamski's claims that the ETs viewed the development of nuclear weapons as a threat to the future of humanity were a cause of deep concern among officials. Such views led the FBI to consider him, along with George Van Tassel, a subversive who required close monitoring, according to a 1952 document.<sup>13</sup>

A lecture by Adamski at a California Lions Club on 12 March 1953 was covered by a local newspaper, which reported that Adamski had official FBI and Air Force clearance to present his material to the public. According to Adamski this newspaper report was "incorrect", but it led to a visit by FBI and Air Force representatives who were apparently concerned by references to official clearance. The representatives demanded that Adamski sign a document that his material did not have official clearance.<sup>14</sup> J. Edgar Hoover's office received the FBI and Air Force representatives' report, together with the signed document. Adamski's popularity and his international travel led to the FBI and other intelligence agencies paying close attention to his

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statements and public reactions. In February 1959, Adamski travelled to New Zealand and spoke before packed audiences. A one-page Foreign Service dispatch with Adamski's key talking points was circulated to the FBI, CIA, Air Force and Navy, thus confirming the continued monitoring of Adamski.

Other contactees who were monitored by the FBI, according to declassified documents, included Daniel Fry, George Hunt Williamson and Truman Bethurum.<sup>15</sup> Information relayed by contactees concerning the social and economic systems of the extraterrestrials, together with the ETs' criticism of the nuclear weapons development occurring around the globe, led to them and their supporters being considered security threats. Given the national hysteria over communism during the McCarthy era, this led to counterintelligence programs being implemented against the contactees.

## Phase Two: Debunking and Discrediting Contactees

The CIA played an active role in creating the necessary legal, political and social environment for the debunking of flying saucer reports and discrediting contactee claims. It did so by depicting flying saucer reports as a national security threat insofar as mass hysteria over them could be exploited by foreign enemies. Solid justification for such a psychological program was built on the famous 1938 radio broadcast by Orson Welles.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, the CIA led covert psychological operations that would "educate" the American public about the "correct facts" concerning flying saucer reports and contactee claims. One of the first actions taken by the CIA was to initiate the creation of an interagency government group called the Psychological Strategy Board (PSB) that would deal with national security threats through covert psychological operations.

A presidential directive on 4 April 1951 created the Psychological Strategy Board "to authorize and provide for the more effective planning, coordination, and conduct within the framework of approved national policies, of psychological operations".<sup>17</sup> Set up by Gordon Gray, a top adviser to President Truman at the time, the PSB was initially located within the CIA but reported to the National Security Council. Ostensibly, the PSB would lead covert psychological operations to deal with the Cold War threat, but this threat was a cover for its true function. In reality, the Psychological Strategy Board was created to deal with the national security threat posed by flying saucer reports and contactee claims that could undermine the authority of the US government.

According to leaked government documents, Gray is described as a founding member of the secret control group, allegedly titled the Majestic-12 Special Studies Group (MJ-12), which took charge of the extraterrestrial issue.<sup>18</sup> According to one of the leaked Majestic documents, President Truman created the PSB on the recommendation of the head of MJ-12.<sup>19</sup> Gray's leadership and the role of MJ-12 in the board's creation help confirm that the PSB was created to run psychological operations to shape public opinion on the ET issue.

The success of the Psychological Strategy Board, and that of its successor, the Operations Coordinating Board, as well as that of all covert psychological operations concerning extraterrestrial life depended upon the truth being disclosed only to those with a "need to know".<sup>20</sup> This required the creation of a suitable national security cover for psychological operations against the American public. Victory would be achieved through the formation of a panel of experts that could shape government policy and intelligence activities against those involved in ET affairs.

Named after its chairman, Dr Howard Robertson, the Robertson Panel reviewed cases of flying saucers over a four-day period for a total of 12 hours and found none of them to be credible. Conclusions by the panel were released in a document called the Durant Report. It recommended ridiculing the "flying saucer phenomenon", and the possibility of extraterrestrial life, for national security reasons. The report is key to understanding the institutionally sanctioned debunking and discrediting of evidence concerning extraterrestrial life. Confirmation of the leading role of the CIA in convening the panel and choosing experts appears in the Durant Report itself, despite efforts in early releases of sanitised versions to suppress the CIA's role.<sup>21</sup>

Almost exclusively, the Durant Report focused on the national security threat posed by foreign powers exploiting the American public's belief in the flying saucer phenomenon. It declared that related dangers might well exist, resulting from "[s]ubjectivity of public to mass hysteria and greater vulnerability to possible enemy psychological warfare", and that "if reporting channels are saturated with false and poorly documented reports, our capability of detecting hostile activity will be reduced".<sup>22</sup>

Consequently, the Robertson Panel recommended an "educational program" to remove the threat posed by enemy nations exploiting the public's belief in flying saucers:

"The Panel's concept of a broad educational program integrating efforts of all concerned agencies was that it should have two major aims: training and 'debunking'... The 'debunking' aim would result in reduction in public interest in 'flying saucers' which today evokes a strong psychological reaction.

This education could be accomplished by mass media such as television, motion pictures, and popular articles... Such a program should tend to reduce the current gullibility of the public and consequently their susceptibility to clever hostile propaganda."<sup>23</sup>

So, the panel concluded that the public's psychological reaction to flying saucers was the basis of a possible security threat. The Cold War provided the necessary security environment for the CIA and interagency entities such as the Psychological Strategy Board to claim that flying saucers could be exploited by the Soviet Union using psychological warfare techniques. Consequently, psychological operations would have to be conducted through the mass media and official agencies to debunk flying saucer reports and remove the possible threat. Irrespective of the truth of contactees' claims of having met with ETs, this meant that the public's possible reaction to the reality of

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flying saucers and extraterrestrial life justified debunking all contactee reports.

The Durant Report created the *necessary legal justification to debunk evidence provided by contactees, regardless of the merits of their claims*. This is evidenced in the way in which the FBI and other intelligence agencies privately interacted with contactees and then made public statements or leaked information to the media in ways that questioned the integrity of the contactees. For example, Adamski had communicated with the FBI, AFOSI and the Pentagon over the content of material that he would put in his books or in documents he would present to the public. This is not surprising, given that many contactees, like Adamski, were former military servicemen who understood the importance of not doing anything to threaten national security. Adamski had been led to believe that he was cleared to distribute a particular document, and he made public statements to this effect. The FBI disagreed and subsequently made public its views about Adamski's alleged "fraudulent, improper" behaviour in a way that delivered a "huge blow to Adamski's credibility".<sup>24</sup>

At the time when the general public believed unquestionably in the accuracy of statements made by public officials, such negative comments would be sufficient to end one's career or credibility. Certainly, many in the general public interested in the flying saucer phenomenon now believed Adamski to be a fraud. What the public did not realise was that intelligence agencies such as the FBI and AFOSI were intent on debunking contactees as a matter of policy due to the threat they posed to national security.

Another way in which contactee claims were debunked was to have tabloid newspapers such as the *National Enquirer* publish sensational reports that embellished actual contactee testimonies or were entirely fabricated by staff reporters. Any subsequent investigations by researchers would demonstrate that such claims were exaggerated or unfounded, thereby tainting the contactees and UFO research more generally.

What was not generally known was that the *National Enquirer* was created and controlled by known CIA assets whose covert assignment was to ridicule the entire flying saucer phenomenon.<sup>25</sup> With its sensationalistic tabloid style, *it was one of the chief instruments of the covert psychological operations used to debunk contactee claims and flying saucer reports*. The *National Enquirer* and other media sources covering contactee claims were part of the "educational program" that required the debunking of flying saucer reports.

The *National Enquirer* succeeded so well that influential UFO researchers determined to establish the scientific merit in investigating UFO reports became unwitting allies to the covert psychological program to dismiss contactee claims. This is evidenced in remarks by leading UFO researchers such as Major Donald Keyhoe, who emphasised the need to separate genuine UFO reports from "the mass of wild tales and usually ridiculous 'contactee' claims".<sup>26</sup>

Keyhoe and other UFO researchers were greatly concerned

about contactee claims that were being exaggerated by the press: "...the press unfortunately lump all 'spacemen' reports together, causing many people to reject all of the UFO evidence".<sup>27</sup> Essentially, Keyhoe viewed contactee reports as an embarrassment that needed to be separated from the more scientifically oriented UFO research. Other prominent UFO researchers followed Keyhoe's approach, thus creating a major schism among those convinced that extraterrestrial life was visiting Earth.

The successful debunking of reports of flying saucers and extraterrestrial life made it possible for the CIA, FBI and military intelligence agencies to move to the third phase of their covert psychological operations: full-scale counterintelligence warfare techniques to disrupt and neutralise the contactee movement.

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### **Phase Three: Galactic COINTELPRO**

COINTELPRO was a counterintelligence program initiated in 1956 against political dissidents and reportedly ended in 1971. It was primarily run by the FBI; other intelligence agencies such as the CIA and NSA assisted in select covert activities. COINTELPRO assumed that political dissidents in the United States were being influenced by foreign powers in ways deemed a threat to US national security. In the case of both contactees and political dissidents, the influence of "foreign powers" was thought to justify military-style counterintelligence programs to disrupt and neutralise these groups.

There were two significant differences in how COINTELPRO was used against political dissidents and contactees respectively. First, while intelligence agents were fully briefed about the "foreign powers" influencing political dissidents, it is unlikely they were fully briefed about contactees. Second, while COINTELPRO's use against political dissidents was exposed and apparently ended in 1971, the COINTELPRO used against contactees was never exposed. The program almost certainly continues to the present.

In 1975, a US Senate committee chaired by Senator Frank Church investigated COINTELPRO's methods and targets, and in 1976 published a detailed report.<sup>28</sup> The Church Committee described COINTELPRO as going "...beyond the collection of intelligence to secret action defined to 'disrupt' and 'neutralize' target groups and individuals. The techniques were adopted wholesale from wartime counterintelligence..."<sup>29</sup>

The committee characterised COINTELPRO as a series of covert actions taken against American citizens and part of a "rough, tough, dirty business", according to William Sullivan, assistant to the FBI Director.<sup>30</sup> Between 1960 and 1974, over 500,000 investigations of potential anti-government subversives had been launched but no charges were ever laid under statutes concerning overthrow of the US government.<sup>31</sup>

The Church Committee grouped the activities conducted by COINTELPRO under the following headings: (a) General Efforts to Discredit; (b) Media Manipulation; (c) Distorting Data to Influence Government Policy and Public Perceptions; (d)

"Chilling" First Amendment Rights; and (e) Preventing the Free Exchange of Ideas.<sup>32</sup> The committee found that "[o]fficials of the intelligence agencies occasionally recognized that certain activities were illegal... [and] that the law and the Constitution, were simply ignored".<sup>33</sup> More disturbingly, the committee concluded that "[u]nsavory and vicious tactics have been employed".<sup>34</sup>

The Church Committee did not discuss COINTELPRO in regard to the UFO issue or contactee claims. Despite that omission, circumstantial evidence clearly points to COINTELPRO being used against contactees and being the final stage of a well-orchestrated counterintelligence program to "disrupt" and "neutralize" the contactee movement. As shown earlier in the cases of Van Tassel and Adamski, contactee claims dealing with a range of socio-economic and military policies from the perspective of extraterrestrial life were viewed as subversive and a direct threat to US national security.

The full nature of the threat posed by the reality of extraterrestrial life and technologies was vividly evidenced in the 1961 Brookings Institution Report, commissioned by NASA on behalf of the US Congress. Titled "Proposed Studies on the Implications of Peaceful Space Activities for Human Affairs", the report discussed the societal impact of extraterrestrial life or "artifacts" being found on nearby planetary bodies. Devastating societal effects, according to the report, could result from contact with more technologically advanced off-world societies:

"Anthropological files contain many examples of societies, sure of their place in the universe, which have disintegrated when they had to associate with previously unfamiliar societies espousing different ideas and different life ways; others that survived such an experience usually did so by paying the price of changes in values, attitudes and behavior."<sup>35</sup>

The Brookings Report went on to raise the possibility of suppressing any announcement of extraterrestrial life or artifacts for national security reasons:

"How might such information, under what circumstances, be presented or withheld from the public?"<sup>36</sup>

Consequently, it is clear that official fear over societal responses to any official announcement of extraterrestrial life was a paramount national security concern. A powerful justification for the use of COINTELPRO against contactees had been found.

One of the most important tactics used by COINTELPRO was to disrupt dissident groups by creating divisions and suspicion among their supporters. In the "Galactic" version of COINTELPRO, disruption occurred by dividing those who accepted evidence confirming the reality of UFOs and extraterrestrial life. A division between exponents of a purely scientific approach to UFO data and those supporting the testimonies of contactees was cleverly exploited by COINTELPRO operatives. Victory would be achieved by convincing more technically oriented supporters of a purely scientific approach that the contactee movement would discredit "serious" researchers. To help convince supporters of a scientific approach that their efforts would eventually bear fruit, an official Air Force investigation was launched in 1952. Project *Blue Book* was little more than a public relations exercise by the US Air Force to convince the general public and UFO researchers that it was taking UFO reports seriously.<sup>37</sup>

One of Project *Blue Book*'s primary functions was to carry out the first plank of the "education program" recommended by the Durant Report. It would "train" the general public in how to evaluate the UFO data correctly in ways that would defuse public and media interest in such reports. In short, *Blue Book* was a key part of the covert psychological operations being conducted to convince the general public and media that UFO reports were not important and not worth considering. Nevertheless, the status of Project *Blue Book* as an official Air Force investigation encouraged UFO researchers that rigorous scientific methods and research would eventually bear fruit. Such hopes were dashed in 1969 by the Condon Committee's final report which publicly put an end to the Air Force investigation and Project *Blue Book*.

Another primary function of *Blue Book* was to neutralise the contactee movement by depicting personal testimonies of contact with extraterrestrials as unscientific. By providing a highly visible public investigation, Project *Blue Book* provided the *necessary "training" for scientific research that would systematically exclude contactee reports*. UFO researchers would be encouraged to attack contactee reports as unscientific, prone to delusion or fraud and an insult to "serious" UFO research. Statements by leading UFO researchers such as Dr J. Allen

Hynek, a former consultant to Project *Blue Book*, provide evidence that such a process occurred. In a 1972 book purporting to provide the scientific foundations of UFO research, Dr Hynek dismissed testimonies of contactees, whom he regarded as "pseudoreligious fanatics" with "low credibility value":

"It is unfortunate, to say the least, that reports such as these have brought down upon the entire UFO problem the opprobrium and ridicule of scientists and public alike, keeping alive the popular image of 'little

green men' and the fictional atmosphere surrounding that aspect of the subject."<sup>38</sup>

UFO researchers attacked contactee reports with great vigour to defuse what they considered to be a major challenge to serious public consideration of UFO reports. By encouraging UFO researchers that a purely scientific method would result in the truth about UFOs and extraterrestrial life eventually coming out, Galactic COINTELPRO succeeded in creating a major schism among those accepting the reality of UFOs and extraterrestrial life. By the end of the 1960s, the contactee movement had been so thoroughly debunked and discredited by UFO researchers that COINTELPRO no longer needed to have Project *Blue Book* continue. *UFO researchers had become the unwitting accomplices of intelligence agencies conducting the various covert psychological programs that made up Galactic COINTELPRO*. It also had a more sinister side in terms of the "[u]nsavory and vicious tactics" that were employed against contactees, which reflected methods used against political dissidents.<sup>39</sup>

The mysterious Men in Black (MIB) phenomenon has been described by various researchers who discovered that individuals with extraterrestrial-related experiences were often threatened and harassed by well-dressed men in dark business suits who gave the appearance of being public officials. Evidence that elite intelligence groups were tasked to intimidate, harass and even neutralise contactees or others with direct experience with ETs or

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their technology appears in a leaked document that a number of veteran UFO researchers consider to be legitimate.<sup>40</sup> This document, the *Majestic-12 Group Special Operations Manual* (SOM1-01) of April 1954, stated:

"If at all possible, witnesses will be held incommunicado until the extent of their knowledge and involvement can be determined. Witnesses will be discouraged from talking about what they have seen, and intimidation may be necessary to ensure their cooperation."<sup>41</sup>

Investigations were also conducted by the US Air Force, which was concerned by reports that MIB had impersonated Air Force officials.<sup>42</sup> The shadowy operations of the MIB and the SOM1-01 document suggests that they were part of an "enforcement" division of the counterintelligence effort that comprised the FBI, the Air Force's OSI, the Navy's Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) and even the CIA. It's very possible that MIB were associated with more secretive intelligence agencies such as the NSA and the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), where selected agents had higher security clearances for dealing with evidence of extraterrestrial life.<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, a pecking order existed among the intelligence agencies involved in Galactic COINTELPRO, where each conducted specific functions. Agents drawn from the FBI, AFOSI and other military intelligence units including the ONI were primarily involved in intelligence gathering and closely monitoring the activities of contactees, as evidenced in documents released under the Freedom of Information Act. The CIA was involved in coordinating, debunking and discrediting efforts against contactees through a public education program outlined in the Durant Report. The NSA and NRO were involved in tracking communications and interactions with extraterrestrial life, and provided enforcement teams to withdraw evidence and intimidate contactees into silence. Galactic COINTELPRO could therefore minimise the amount of ET-related information held by different sections in each intelligence agency, where agents were instructed to perform specific functions. Most out of the loop concerning the reality of extraterrestrial life and the merit of contactee claims was the FBI. On the other hand, the NSA and NRO appeared to be most in the loop due to their monitoring of extraterrestrial activities through electronic communication and satellite imagery. Military intelligence agencies appeared to fill intermediate functions where they supported Galactic COINTELPRO, without being given access to all information concerning ET life and projects.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusion

Galactic COINTELPRO as deployed against contactees aimed to minimise the threat posed by human-looking extraterrestrials to policies adopted by secretly appointed committees with regard to extraterrestrial life and technologies. Primarily, the threat from the extraterrestrials was that they would succeed in having contactees convince large portions of the American and global public of the

need for comprehensive policy changes to prepare humanity for status as a galactic society. Such policy changes were considered a direct security threat by policy-makers in the US and in other countries who were briefed about the reality of extraterrestrial life.

Galactic COINTELPRO involved three interrelated phases that culminated in a comprehensive counterintelligence program to disrupt and neutralise the threat posed by the contactee movement.

First was a surveillance program, orchestrated by the FBI, which closely monitored the contactees' public lectures, interactions and communications. Documents released through the FOIA have confirmed that the FBI conducted extensive monitoring of prominent contactees and worked with other intelligence agencies such as the AFOSI.

The second phase of Galactic COINTELPRO was a debunking and discrediting program, secretly run by the CIA which convened

the Robertson Panel which issued the Durant Report in 1953. Its most important finding for the counterintelligence program was to justify an education program comprising "training" the public and "debunking" witness testimonies, including those of contactees, on the basis of the national security threat posed by the public's belief in UFOs being exploited by foreign enemies. Irrespective of the merit of contactee claims, this meant that evidence and statements would be debunked and discredited on national security grounds. Intelligence professionals were in the unenviable position of debunking and discrediting people whom

they may have privately concluded were genuinely describing actual events that had occurred to them. FBI documents establish that FBI agents and sources played an active role in discrediting prominent contactees as part of the CIA's psychological program against contactees.

Galactic COINTELPRO's final stage was to create a schism between those accepting evidence of extraterrestrial life. UFO researchers advocating a scientific methodology were encouraged to dissociate themselves from contactee claims that were

regarded as unscientific and unlikely to lead to public support by academics, bureaucrats and congressional representatives. Project *Blue Book* was created to encourage UFO researchers to hold on to the misguided belief that a strict scientific methodology would be sufficient to overturn government policy on covering up the reality of extraterrestrial life. UFO researchers therefore led the charge against contactee claims being seriously considered. Aided by the *Blue Book* investigation, the public was trained in what categories of UFO evidence ought to be considered legitimate. None of these categories included contactee claims.

Galactic COINTELPRO could not have succeeded without the unwitting assistance of veteran UFO researchers who were all too eager to dismiss contactee claims as unscientific and prone to delusion or fraud. Such researchers failed miserably to anticipate the Galactic COINTELPRO that had been implemented to disrupt and neutralise contactee testimonies, and readily accepted official

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statements questioning the integrity of contactee claims. Indeed, the eagerness with which UFO researchers established themselves as the gatekeepers of serious scientific research into UFOs and debunked contactee claims marks the most tragic aspect of six decades of research into UFOs and extraterrestrial life.

Another key factor in the success of Galactic COINTELPRO to the present time has been the compartmentalisation of ET-related information. This made it possible for intelligence agencies to perform specific functions within Galactic COINTELPRO without agents being informed of the truth of contactee claims. The success of debunking and discrediting contactees would have to depend on intelligence agents believing that contactees were a genuine security threat. Consequently, ET-related information was made available on a strict need-to-know basis, ensuring that only selected individuals within different intelligence agencies were briefed at all.

In conclusion, many pioneering men and women who may have accurately related

their physical contact with extraterrestrials had their reputations and careers systematically undermined by public officials, the mass media and UFO researchers.

It appears that such an outcome was intended as part of an official Galactic COINTELPRO that continues to the present day—in contrast to the 1971 termination of the FBI's COINTELPRO against political dissidents. It is very likely that individuals in public office, the mass media and the UFO research community may be active agents of an ongoing COINTELPRO against contactees.

It is hoped that exposure of Galactic COINTELPRO will help dispel the reflexive dismissal of contactee testimonies that so far has hindered an objective evaluation of direct physical contact between private citizens and extraterrestrial life.

### **About the Author:**

Michael D. Salla, PhD, has held academic appointments in the School of International Service, American University, Washington, DC (1996–2001), and at the Department of Political Science, Australian National

University, Canberra, Australia (1994–96). He taught as an adjunct faculty member at George Washington University, Washington, DC, in 2002. He has a PhD in Government from the University of Queensland, Australia, and an MA in Philosophy from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

NEXUS has published several articles by Dr Salla: "An Exopolitical Perspective on the Pre-emptive US-led War against Iraq" (NEXUS 10/03); "Charles Hall and the Tall White Extraterrestrials" (12/02); "Using Space Weapons Against ET Civilisations" (13/02); and "Project *Serpo*: A Public Acclimation or Deception Program?" (13/03). His book, *Exopolitics: Political Implications of the Extraterrestrial Presence* (Dandelion Books, 2004), was reviewed in NEXUS 11/05.

For more information, visit Dr Salla's websites <http://www.exopolitics.org> and <http://www.galacticdiplomacy.com>, or email Dr Salla at [drsalla@exopolitics.org](mailto:drsalla@exopolitics.org).

Due to space constraints, we cannot include endnotes accompanying Dr Salla's article, so see <http://www.exopolitics.org>.

Dr Salla will be presenting his Galactic COINTELPRO research at the Earth Transformation Conference in Hawaii (16–18 May 2008), which features many contactees currently interacting with "human-looking" extraterrestrials. For details, visit the website <http://www.EarthTransformation.com>.